



JAN BRAUNHOLZ 2019-09-12

CAN COFFEE BE SUSTAINABLE ?

ECONOFICTION COFFEE, COMMONS, FAIRTRADE, NESTLE, SUSTAINABILITY

After participating at the Sustainability Congress one day before WOC Berlin June 2019, I was thinking : what a mess...can coffee really be sustainable?

Especially after the presentation from Nespresso i had to LOL !

I questioned Mr.Ranitzsch about Nespresso Mexico and the Problems and Resistance against the Robusta Project in the State of Veracruz and Oaxaca. 20 years ago they started with this project in Tezonapa. It's also part of my documentary film 'Cafe Rebeldia', Mexico 2000-2008, 75 min – which you can find on the webpage downwards . I also wrote articles about that.

First answer: ' I don't know , I'm not from Nestle , only from Nespresso ! ' and there are no problems with Nespresso in the Huatulco and Ixthuatlan Region'.Again i mentioned the actual resistance from CNOC , El Barzon, SPP/CLAC against the new Nestle Factory in the Industrial Zone of the City of Veracruz !

The new mexican president AMLO (Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador) is supporting that project too. And again: ' I don't know about Nestle's activities! ' ,I could not believe it... But ,he answered: ' I know you and your articles about the project ! '

Also the Audience was astonished and had to laugh and I was thinking by myself: better then nothing ! 'he knows me' ? I never met him before...nore in the future i hope. This is only one example how big companies act for their own purpose. They are using the actual coffee (price) crisis because of Climate Change and Roya, they use in Mexico big support from SAGARPA with the Sarchimor/Catimor /Robusta Program and the campesinos have to accept- get poor money or 'die', leave their fields and migrate !

Nestle pays sometimes only 5 Mexican Pesos per Kilo and sell Nespresso capsules in Germany for around 70 €/kg.

I hope you all know the words from Ex-Ceo Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, something like:

'Nestle is sustainable,when the products also will buy your grandsons and grandchilds' Fairtrade have no chance against them. The influence is too small because, they only have for example in Germany 4% of the market !

The consumers know Fairtrade, but mostly now decision to buy, because supermarkets offer cheap, bad quality coffee . On the other side we have the Fairtrade importers, like Gepa and Mitka, who are struggling very hard to get more approach to the market. I'm supporting this more than 30 years, starting in Nicaragua in the mid 80'ties, El Salvador after the war 1992 and 1997 after the 1994 Zapatista uprising in Chiapas/Mexico with the Zapatista Coffee Cooperatives.

But there was also resistance from Max Havelaar founders like Frans Vanderhoff/ UCIRI against our activities. He wanted not that they will be certified by Flo-Cert and tried to crash up a Swiss contract from Bertschi Kaffee with the Zapatista Coop Mut Vitz in this time. But it does not work – luckily the international solidarity movement was strong , builded up imports first to the US, Germany, Suisse, Italy, Spain, Greece etc. like Coop Coffees in Canada/USA.

Years later the coffee crisis and the roya pushed them down too. Minus 80% to -90 % coffee harvest in Chiapas and this caused big troubles and splittings between the zapatista coffee importers in europe, in germany till the court! Ok Roya , you all know that. Other cooperatives got credit programs like Rootcapital, Oikocredit or from the state to renovate their cafetales/coffee-fields. Zapatistas not. So bad chances to renovate their small fields. The average income of the producers in the mountains of Chiapas is 500 \$ per year ! And the migration rises up.

In El Salvador our actual partner Coop Las Lajas will need 20-25 years to reach the same harvest as before the Roya Tsunami came! They have bank credits and pay 9% interests. So I asked Oikocredit but for them the risk is to high. On the other side they gave big money to Caravela Coffee. So we buy 3-4 containers per year from Coop Las Lajas and one from Coop Combrifol/ Marcala-Honduras for the german market and our brand 'Cafe la Cortadora'.

They next actual idea because of the climate crisis and CO2 footprint is the transport by sail-ship Avontuur(Advantage) from Nicaragua and Mexico to Europe + Germany organized by different importers like our partners from Mitka, El Puente and El Rojito . The brand is called 'Cafe Vela'. Is this sustainable or only a good advertising gag ? I thought.

Well on the one side it's nice idea, no ship-diesel ; no contamination...ok! But there are little problems too. In Bluefields-Atlantic coast of Nicaragua- it's not possible to load the coffee. So they have to transport the harvest from Boaca Nicaragua by truck around 800 km to Port La Ceiba in Honduras. Ok they can do CO2 certificates...hmm, not really a good solution. But the main problem is : the sailor-ship goes back empty across the Atlantic to Mexico and Honduras.

The transport costs are rising up...and the selling price in future is not comparable with the normal import with containers and big ships and from Corinto-Pacific Coast of Nicaragua or Port of Veracruz Mexico.

They are looking now to fill up the boat but with the actual crisis in Nicaragua it's very difficult to import goods via Honduras. Corruption at the borders is the main problem.

But the politics and the violence against human rights by paramilitars from the actual Regime of Murillo/Ortega, can give the coffee production in Nicaragua the rest.

I did not talked about Colombia. El Puente imports from Red Ecol Sierra and Juan Tama Coops. The actual notices about the re-arming from FARC and the Paramilitar Extralegal Murdering of Ex-Farc members and sindicalists + environment activists are horrible!

So we will see what Coffee-Future brings – the discussion is open!

Thank you-Muchas Gracias
Jan Braunholz

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